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HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES. By John Bach McMaster. Vol. VIII. New York: D. Appleton & Company. 1913.

Some thirty years ago Professor John Bach McMaster of the University of Pennsylvania published the first volume of a *History of the People of the United States*. It was the beginning of a work now completed which covers the period in our history from the Revolution to the Civil War. The eighth and final volume of this great undertaking has appeared during the summer of 1913, and in it the author has treated of a period of surpassing interest,—1850 to 1861. This was a time of great economic expansion, of vigorous national growth, and of a buoyancy of thought and confidence of action that but added to the intensity of the great prologue to the Civil War then playing,—that is to say, the political and parliamentary struggle over the extension of slavery.

This volume is consistent in unity and purpose with the plan of the entire history, and shows the same strong features and the same defects as the early part of the work. There are fairness of treatment, great accuracy in details, and abundant wealth of material, but there is also a lack of *personality*, both as regards the writer and the persons written about. The reader will look in vain for one real character sketch or personal estimate in this story of the times of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, of Douglas, Seward, Giddings, Toombs, Sumner, and Yancey! Professor McMaster is remarkable in the collecting and ordering of facts, which he handles with the domination of a master, yet he never discloses to the reader how well he has digested them. His literary product is a chronicle rather than a treatise, it is scientific rather than human. Therefore, while the entire work contains much new material and is a great storehouse of facts, it is epoch marking rather than epoch making.

An especial use has been made of the newspapers of the times, and in collecting this kind of material the author has gone far beyond Rhodes and the other historians of the period in the range and thoroughness of his search. The papers of the South and of the smaller cities of the middle West have been read very thoroughly, and as a result the opinions of these

sections have not been unduly subordinated to those of New York, Boston, Chicago, and Washington. Furthermore, these very human newspaper sources have given the few touches of real flesh and blood that the volume possesses. For the same reason, Professor McMaster is especially successful in the treatment of the chapters on "Social Ferment" (LXXXVII) and life "On the Plains" (XCV). In the first-named chapter there are fine accounts of overland emigration, municipal problems, the temperance and early labor movements and the beginnings of the agitation for equal rights for women. The other chapter gives vivid descriptions of the "Mormon War" of 1857, the rush to Pike's Peak, the early stage lines, and the "Pony Express."

Evidently influenced by the partisan character of much of his material, Professor McMaster seems to think (pages 14 to 17) that there was very real danger to the Union in the secession agitation prevalent in the South during the debate on the Compromise of 1850. Former historians have thought that these threats of secession were put forth by the Southern leaders for political effect, and were held with a real intent only by a few of the extremists known as the "Fire-Eaters." I am inclined to think that this view still holds good. The feeling of a large part of the South and especially of the border states even so late as the winter of 1860-61 would tend to prove it.

Professor McMaster gives one of the best descriptions ever written of this Southern feeling from the time of the election of Lincoln till the call for troops after the firing on Fort Sumter (see chapters XCVI and XCVII). He clearly shows that a large number of the people, although they believed in slavery, in the right of secession and in the justice of the cause of the South, yet wished and hoped till the last moment that the controversy would be settled peaceably within the Union. He paraphrases their views as follows: "Let us remain in the Union, and if we have to fight for our liberties fight under the Stars and Stripes. If Lincoln violates his oath let us dethrone him, but while we hurl him to earth let us hold to the Constitution, and put in his place one who will obey it. Not the election of Mr. Lincoln causes alarm in the South, but what he represents; the deep-

seated enmity to Southern institutions which is ready to overleap the bounds of the Constitution. That is what justly awakens the solicitude of the Southern people and makes it hard for them to wait and give his administration a fair trial. But they should, and we hope they will. It seems as if certain cotton states were about to go off by themselves and form a Cotton Confederacy totally regardless of other states which do not recognize Cotton as their King. This is a poor way to uphold the rights of the South. Though we consider the Black Republican crusade incompatible with the existence of the Union, we trust the South will not take any extreme action. Lincoln has been constitutionally elected, and his elevation to power can no longer be resisted save by naked and palpable revolution" (page 475).

The decision of Lincoln to coerce the seceding cotton states caused the feeling in them to be practically unanimous for secession, and they were joined almost immediately by Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

The volume fittingly closes with a quotation from Lincoln's inaugural address, the final lines of which are so prophetic of today—"The mystic chords of memory . . . will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

WILLIAM STARR MYERS.

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PAN-GERMANISM. By Roland G. Usher, Ph.D. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. pp. 314. \$1.75.

The treatment of contemporary problems of world politics by a capable historical scholar is so much to be desired that one is apt to feel strong inclination to welcome the writer who undertakes it; moreover, the difficulties which he must encounter are so great that some leniency and sympathy are apt to be felt as a matter of course. On the other hand, he who attempts to write a book of this kind undertakes a task which involves grave responsibility. There is a large class of readers to whom no history would be more interesting or of more practical value, in so much as they would be enabled better to appreciate the forces in play about them, of which they themselves make a part. The